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A Judge's View

Horace D. Dickinson

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A JUDGE'S VIEW

District Judge Horace D. Dickinson of Minneapolis, in his instructions to the grand jury in which he made the statement that the grand jury is an unnecessary expense to the taxpayers of the nation, made the following comments:

"I do not advocate entire abolition of the grand jury system. There should be some power retained whereby a grand jury could be called in times of necessity, such as a crisis, or to investigate public conduct of public officials. But in general justice could be speeded up by allowing the county attorney's office to handle indictments just as it now does informations.

"The general prevalence of crime today is not due to any crime wave. It is due to the failure of society to punish crime. No other adequate, practical workable deterrent ever has or can be devised. The trouble is that today when the criminal falls, we provide a bed of roses to receive that fall, so to speak. Prison life is made more attractive than outside life, which naturally takes away much of the punishment.

"Today we find too many laws, and too much irreverence of them. Then, too, there are too many delays in administration of justice. Our system is a great sieve with innumerable holes for criminals to slip through. Delays, compromises, bargains, in administration of laws all operate against swift and sure punishment. Swiftmess, severity, and surety in dealing out punishments is what this country needs today. We must carry the fear of God and man into the hearts of potential criminals, as well as those already criminals.

"The indeterminate sentence, parole of prisoners, and the pardon system is excellent for rehabilitation of offenders who are not real criminals. The system should be retained to apply to those who may have erred through folly, or through haste, or through other reasons at some time in their lives, whereas they would not offend habitually. But the system most emphatically should not be allowed to apply to the real criminal. Parole and pardon should be denied to the gunman and the gangster—potential murderers."

NOTES:

Professor Chas. Kellogg Burdick has been elected dean of Cornell Law School.

It is now proposed that there be adopted a uniform Inter-American negotiable instruments law.

The International Law Association will hold its biennial in Vienna from August 5th to 11th, 1926.

Governor Richardson of California has appointed a commission for the reform of criminal procedure under an act of the last legislature.

The Republic of Argentina has appropriated the sum of \$15,000.00 to defray expenses incident to a conference of bar associations to consider uniform civil procedure and judiciary acts.